Thornaby Chess Club Safeguarding Policy

Version: 2.3
Date: 25th October 2026

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1. Policy Statement

Thornaby Chess Club ("the Club") is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults. We aim to provide a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment where all members and visitors feel valued, listened to, and protected from harm.

This policy applies to all members, officials, volunteers, parents/carers, visitors, and anyone taking part in Club activities, including inter-club and league matches.

Definitions:

- **Child / junior player:** Anyone under 18.
- **Vulnerable adult:** Anyone who, due to age, disability, illness, mental ill health, or circumstance, may be unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

The Club adopts and follows English Chess Federation (ECF) safeguarding guidance and relevant UK legislation.

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2. Purpose of the Policy

This policy aims to:

- Protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Provide a safe, sociable, and supportive environment for all chess activity.
- Ensure concerns are recognised, *responded to*, *reported*, and *recorded* appropriately.
- Establish clear expectations for members and visitors.
- Align Club practice with current legislation and ECF guidance.

A copy of this policy will be available on the Club website where practicable.
Adherence to this policy is a condition of membership.

3. Vulnerable Adults

The Club recognises that vulnerability may be temporary, situational, or hidden. We are committed to inclusion and accessibility.

Members should:

- Treat vulnerable adults with sensitivity and respect.
- Report concerns about potential neglect, coercion, discrimination, or exploitation.
- Respect an adult's right to make unwise decisions unless coercion or risk of significant harm is suspected.

Potential practical considerations for vulnerable/disabled adult members where possible maybe include:

- Ensure the playing venue is accessible or provide reasonable adjustments
- Support visually impaired or Deaf players with appropriate aids (e.g., large-print boards, notation support, clear communication)
- Provide quiet spaces or reasonable adjustments for autistic players or those with sensory needs.
- Offer reasonable assistance to players who require mobility support, safe access, or additional time.

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4. Scope of Club Activities

The Club:

- Welcomes both adults and juniors
- May include juniors in league and inter-club matches when appropriate
- Encourages members to support junior development safely
- **Does not act in loco parentis**—parents/carers remain responsible for their child unless different arrangements are agreed in writing

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5. Legal and Policy Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) — principles
- Care Act 2014
- ECF Safeguarding Policies and Procedures
- Local authority safeguarding procedures

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6. Safeguarding Officers, Recruitment & DBS Checks

The Club will appoint:

- **Safeguarding Officer:** Christopher Swales (Club Secretary)

Responsibilities

- Promoting safeguarding within the Club
- Acting as the first point of contact for all concerns
- Receiving, recording, and escalating concerns
- Liaising with statutory authorities and the ECF Safeguarding Team
- Maintaining secure safeguarding records
- Reviewing and updating safeguarding procedures

Recruitment and Safer Appointments

Roles involving **direct safeguarding responsibility** or a **high level of trust**—including **Safeguarding Officer**—should be filled by individuals who have:

- A **current Enhanced DBS check**,
- **Including a check against the barred list for work with children and vulnerable adults.**

Because these roles constitute *regulated activity*, an Enhanced DBS with Barred List check is expected irrespective of the exact frequency of contact.

Other officers or volunteers may also be asked to obtain a DBS check where duties involve:

- Regular contact with juniors or vulnerable adults
- Responsibility for junior events, coaching, or travel

- One-to-one or supervisory roles

Safeguarding Training

Officers with direct safeguarding responsibility are expected to complete basic safeguarding training. Recommended online courses include:

- NSPCC Child Protection Introduction
- Local authority safeguarding training modules

Confidentiality

Information is shared only when necessary to protect individuals.
Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where there is risk of serious harm or possible criminal activity.

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7. Recognising and Responding to Abuse

Abuse may be physical, emotional, sexual, financial, or due to neglect. Indicators include unexplained injuries, sudden behavioural changes, distress, sexualised behaviour, or third-party allegations.

All concerns must be taken seriously.

The Four Rs: Recognise • Respond • Report • Record

1. **Recognise**
   Notice signs, disclosures, or behaviours that cause concern.
2. **Respond**
   - Listen carefully and reassure the person.
   - Do not promise confidentiality.
   - Do not question them or investigate.
3. **Report**
   - Contact the Club Safeguarding Officer or Deputy *as soon as possible*.
   - If someone is in **immediate danger**, call **999**.
4. **Record**
   - Write down what you saw/heard *factually and promptly*.
   - Include dates, times, who was present, and what was said.
   - Sign and date your record and pass it to the Safeguarding Officer.

Escalation by the Safeguarding Officer

The safeguarding officer should report significant concerns to:

- Local authority safeguarding services
- Police (if a crime is suspected or immediate risk exists)
- The ECF Safeguarding Manager
- Parents/carers (unless this increases risk)

Records should be kept securely and retained in line with data protection regulations.

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8. Supervision Requirements and Parental Responsibility

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child's safe arrival, behaviour, supervision, and collection, unless written alternative arrangements have been agreed.

Attendance Rules

- **Under 11:**
  Should first attend one of our local library sessions and can only join the club with an invitation from one of these. On club nights, they must be accompanied by a parent/carer or nominated responsible adult (confirmed in writing). The adult must remain on the premises.
- **Ages 11-13:**
  Must be accompanied by a parent/carer or nominated responsible adult (confirmed in writing). The adult must remain on the premises.
- **Ages 14–17:**
  Same as 11-13 initially, but after a few weeks with the agreement of a club official, they may attend unaccompanied with **written parental consent**, including details of independent travel and collection arrangements.

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9. Safe Supervision ('Rule of Three')

- Avoid one-to-one situations between an adult and a child.
- Ensure at least two people are present (two adults, or an adult and another child) wherever possible.

- If one-to-one interaction is unavoidable, it must take place in an open, visible area.

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10. Transport and Travel

General Principle

Parents/carers are responsible for transporting their children to and from the club or to league matches and events.

Transport by club officers or other adult members should be **by exception only**, with strict safeguards:

- Obtain parental consent in advance.
- Never transport a child alone unless unavoidable *and* agreed in writing.
- Only older juniors (14-17) should be considered for transport by adults.
- Use seatbelts and appropriate safety measures.
- Discuss health, accessibility, or additional needs with parents/carers.

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11. Away Matches and External Events

- Parents/carers are responsible for their child's supervision at away venues unless alternative arrangements are agreed in writing.
- Visiting team captains are responsible for juniors in their own teams while at the Club.
- The Club cannot accept responsibility for safeguarding arrangements at external venues or events beyond its control.

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12. Photography and Use of Images

- Parental consent must be obtained before photographing or filming juniors
- Consent may be refused without explanation
- The Club cannot control photography at public or external events
- Any concerns about images should be reported to the Safeguarding Officer

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13. Behaviour and Code of Conduct

All members must:

- Treat others with dignity, fairness, and respect.
- Avoid bullying, harassment, discrimination, or intimidation.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries with juniors and vulnerable adults.
- Report behaviour that gives rise to concern.

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14. Recordkeeping and Confidentiality

The Club will:

- Maintain secure safeguarding records.
- Store information confidentially and in line with GDPR.
- Share information only where necessary to protect individuals or meet statutory requirements.

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15. Equality, Diversity and Protected Characteristics

The Club provides an inclusive environment for all. We do not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.

In line with the Equality Act 2010, the Club protects the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The Club will make reasonable adjustments for disabled members or those with access needs.

16. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if safeguarding guidance changes.

Agreed by the Committee on 25/10/2026